

RESOLUTION 21-22

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PANAMA CITY BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE AARON BESSANT PARK OPERATIONAL POLICIES TO REMOVE BLACKOUT DATES AND INCREASE PARK CAPACITY; DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE OFFICERS OF THE CITY TO MAKE CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S FCT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND TO SUBMIT SAME TO THE FLORIDA COMMUNITIES TRUST.

WHEREAS, in December 2003, the City entered into a Management Plan with the Florida Communities Trust regarding the use and preservation of 96 acres of land in and around Pier Park as a community centerpiece for enhanced recreational and educational opportunity to the residents of and visitors to the City; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2012, during the period of construction of the Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater, the City adopted Operational Policies for Aaron Bessant Park, which among other things, established Spring and Summer Blackout Dates for events that might be held in the Park; and

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2016, the Council revised the Operational Policies to permit certain City sponsored events to be held during the Spring Blackout Period; and

WHEREAS, since 2016, the City has begun evolving into a year-round, family-friendly destination, and has adopted policies and increased personnel such that the City is now better positioned to realize the goals of the Management Plan which contemplate, among other things, "a variety of large festivals and shows throughout the year," and "weekly music in the park"; and

WHEREAS, City Staff has observed that the Aaron Bessant Park

attendance cap of 7,500 set forth in the Operational Policies and Management Plan does not max out the capacity of the Aaron Bessant Park, and estimates that 10,000 persons reflects a truer maximum capacity of the park for festivals and events; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to amend the Management Plan and Aaron Bessant Operational Policies to remove the Blackout Dates and increase park capacity.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, that the City's Operational Policies for Aaron Bessant Park, dated October 14, 2020 are hereby approved, in the form attached and presented as Exhibit A to the Council today.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the appropriate officers of the City are directed to make conforming changes to the Management Plan as it regards the use and capacity of Aaron Bessant Park and to forward such modifications to the Florida Communities Trust and any other interested parties.

THIS RESOLUTION shall be effective immediately upon passage subject to Florida Communities Trust approval of changes to the requested Plan.

PASSED in regular session this 22nd day of October, 2020.

CITY OF PANAMA CITY BEACH

By: 

Mark Sheldon, Mayor



ATTEST:

Lynne Fasone, City Clerk

Resolution 21-22

Operational Policies for Aaron Bessant Park

Mission Statement for the Park:

To preserve designated wetlands and conservation areas and provide publicly available open spaces, fields, lawns and improvements for passive public recreation, public team sports practice and play, smaller team sports tournaments, and smaller festivals, concerts, plays and special events, all to enhance the quality of life for local residents and, during seasons when the City is able to accommodate more visitors, to attract tourists.

Operational Policies:

1. These Operational Policies shall serve as guidelines for the development of specific "Operational Standards" to be incorporated into resolutions, event contracts, the Park Management Plan and Park rules and regulations, as appropriate.
2. Activities within the Park shall be classified as follows, each a "Park Activity" or "Activity":
 - a. Team practice or intramural games
 - b. Sports tournaments
 - c. Festivals
 - i. ticketed with a limited number of tickets
 - ii. open admission, regardless of price
 - d. Concerts, plays and other "one-off" activities (typically less than 4 hours and each a "One-Off Activity")
 - i. ticketed with a limited number of tickets
 - ii. open admission, regardless of price
 - e. Community activities (such as Heart Walk, graduation, or a health fair)
 - f. Other group organized activities, including private invitation only events occupying only a portion of the Park (such as birthday parties, weddings)
3. Park Activities may be classified as Small or Medium
 - a. Small: More than 500 attendees per hour but less than 4,500 attendees per day
 - b. Medium: Between 4,500 and ~~7,500~~ 10,000 attendees per day (generally a Park "Event" under the Park Management Plan)
 - c. No Park Activities larger than 7,500 10,000 attendees per day
 - d. Larger activities shall be held at Frank Brown Park

4. The following activities shall not be considered a "Park Activity" regulated by these policies.
 - a. Park Activities with less than 500 attendees per hour (i.e. smaller than Small)
 - b. Activities which historically have surrounded the Park but not been centered on the Park, specifically:
 - i. Fourth of July fireworks
 - ii. New Year's Eve Ball Drop

5. Operational Standards shall prohibit certain activities in the Park, including without limitation:
 - a. Motorized vehicles except in designated vehicular access and parking areas, and as necessary during set up, take down and routine maintenance.
 - b. Discharge of firearms (the City acting in its proprietary not in its police or regulatory capacity).

- ~~6. Operational Standards shall include the following "Black-Out Dates" during which no Medium or Small Park Activity shall be held except Activities sponsored by the City.

 - a. Spring Break (typically first week of March through first two weeks of April, subject to adjustment by Resolution of the City Council)
 - b. Memorial Day Weekend~~

- ~~7. Operational Standards shall include the following "Black-Out Dates" during which no Medium Park Activity shall be held.

 - a. June 10 through August 10.
 - b. Exception may be made by the City Council for an extraordinary opportunity for a One-Off Activity which is widely supported by the community as benefit to their quality of life even though there is no need to attract additional tourists. All other applicable standards shall apply.~~

8. 6. Operational Standards shall require parking and traffic control for all Park Activities, as follows:
 - a. Small Activities, ticketed and open:
 - i. Adequate onsite parking
 - ii. Adequate signage to direct traffic.
 - iii. Adequate personnel to direct traffic in parking lots and contingency plans to provide additional personnel to direct traffic in roadways and intersections.

- iv. Less stringent requirements may be adequate for a ticketed Small Activity with a corresponding limit placed upon the number of tickets.
- v. A full day or a multi-day Activity will require more careful attention and more strict standards for both routine and contingency parking and vehicular access plans than a One-Off Activity.

b. Medium Activities, ticketed and open:

- i. Adequate onsite and contingency plans for off-site parking including stand-by busses.
- ii. Adequate signage to direct traffic.
- iii. Adequate personnel to direct traffic in parking lots, roadways and intersections.
- iv. Less stringent requirements may be adequate for a ticketed Medium Activity with a corresponding limit placed upon the number of tickets.
- v. A full day or a multi-day Activity will require more careful attention and more strict standards for both routine and contingency parking and vehicular access plans than a One-Off Activity.

- c. Note: Vehicular access to the Park will be at the intersection of West Park Drive and L. C. Hilton. In addition, north access may be acquired from Pier Park Drive and Back Beach Road.

9. 7. Operational standards for all Medium Activities shall require contingency plans for private funding of security forces to maintain crowd-control.
10. 8. Many Park Activities will be "Special Events" as defined in the Special Event Ordinance and, of course will have to comply with the Special Events Ordinance. However, the Sound Ordinance exempts "Special Events" covered by the Special Events Ordinance. Operational Standards should be established to regulate sound in the Park, and a version of those standards can be incorporated into the Special Events ordinance to cover sound from Special Events anywhere in the City.
11. 9. Operational standards shall require all One-Off Activities and Festivals to close by 11:00 PM and all other Park Activities (such as a sports tournament or a private, invitation only Activity) to follow residential noise guidelines after 11:00 pm on Friday evenings, Saturday evenings and the evening of legal holidays, and at 10:00 pm on all other evenings.

12. 10. Operational standards shall prohibit excessive glare toward the beach from temporary night lighting during sea turtle nesting season, the same standards as are applied in Pier Park we assume.
-